

Mr. Speaker, very few of us in this Chamber will be remembered long after we leave Washington, D.C. Almost no one will remember my speech tonight, and it will soon become lost in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Yet we are here in this body because of the heroic efforts of men and women who have given their lives for this country for over 200 years. We can never forget their sacrifices.

The only reason we can participate in the activities of this Chamber is because of the sacrifices of our Armed Forces, particularly those who have paid the ultimate price. They have nobly defended our freedoms and our way of life up to their last measure of devotion. They left behind fathers, mothers, wives, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, friends, and communities to ensure that future generations walk in the light of liberty.

President Lincoln was resolved that those soldiers shall not have died in vain. They and all the soldiers who have died defending American wars and conflicts still deserve that respect and dignity.

Mr. Speaker, we should govern every day with our heroes in mind. We should strive to make them proud of our speech, our actions, and our commitment to our promises. The American Dream, spirit, and Constitution that they fought for should be our charge.

I would be remiss tonight if I did not mention the loved ones these patriots left behind, who are also patriotic. Countless men, women, and children have watched their American soldiers walk away from home, hoping that they will return safely, unaffected physically, mentally, and emotionally. Sadly, many of those heroes never make it home. Knowing that no words can do justice to their sacrifices, I can only say: Thank you. A grateful nation mourns with your loss.

Mr. Speaker, Monday may be the official observance of Memorial Day, but we live with the memory of our fallen heroes every day across our country. I am eternally grateful for their sacrifices.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1845

THE SCOURGE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this coming Monday, May 29, marks the 2-year anniversary of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, called the JVTA.

Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives and the Senate worked together in a bipartisan manner to write this comprehensive, massive law to fight human trafficking. Basically, we said in this legislation that modern-day slavery will not be tolerated in the United States, and that message was made loud and clear when the law was signed 2 years ago.

Since that time, there have been wonderful successes by providing victims with help and services that they need to recover, and by capturing and charging both the traffickers and the buyers according to our law.

DEBBIE'S STORY

Mr. Speaker, Debbie grew up in an idyllic American neighborhood.

The middle child of a close-knit military family living in the suburbs, Debbie could have never imagined that she would be forced into sex slavery.

One cool Phoenix night, Debbie's mother thought nothing of letting her young daughter meet a friend in their front yard one night to play.

Busy with dishes and other children inside, her mother didn't realize that her young daughter, clad in her cartoon pajamas, was being abducted by two men in front of their house.

These deviants threw Debbie in the car, drugged and gang raped her.

They held a loaded gun to her forehead and threatened to pull the trigger if she ever tried to escape.

For 60 days she was forced to have sex with countless men.

Thankfully for Debbie, a lucky anonymous tip led police to a hotel room where they found Debbie tied up and stashed under a bed.

CHERYL BRIGGS' STORY

Cheryl Briggs grew up in an abusive home, sexually and physically abused by her father.

Her mother left when Cheryl was very young to escape the abuse.

At the age of 12, Cheryl didn't know what else to do to get away from the father she feared, so she ran away.

She began hitchhiking with truck drivers and anyone who would take her.

This led her to a ride with a motorcyclist and into human trafficking hell.

He took her to a biker club filled with men who took advantage of her.

He became her trafficker.

She was forced to dance at a strip club by day and sold on the streets at night.

She was trapped in the world of human trafficking.

Cheryl didn't know how to get help.

She had no one to call and no one to provide for her.

No one came to rescue her.

That is until a patron at a strip club found out that she was only 15 and helped her escape.

LENA'S STORY

In her formative years, Lena wore turtle-necks and baggy clothes to school every day.

Why did she do so?

To hide the bruises that covered her entire body.

When her abusive foster mother lost custody, Lena ran away.

She was just 13 years old.

After bolting from the front lawn at the Houston middle school, she ran into a friendly-looking stranger.

This man offered to look after her, protect and love her.

Human traffickers manipulate the vulnerabilities of their victims, he knew that Lena would do anything to feel loved.

For the next 3 months, Lena was trafficked to countless buyers.

He kept her on the move, switching from motel to motel to evade detection.

Finally, after tracking a BackPage advertisement her trafficker posted, police located Lena.

They arrested her trafficker in the hotel next door. With her help, the police ultimately charged her trafficker.

Debbie, Cheryl and Lena are all human trafficking survivors.

The things they had to endure are more horrific than most of us can even imagine.

But they survived, they overcame this tragedy.

It was for survivors like these women that CAROLYN MALONEY and I drafted the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act two years ago.

This far-reaching legislation, led by Senator JOHN CORNYN and Senator RON WYDEN in the Senate, made it clear that Congress would no longer turn a blind eye to this scourge in our society.

We wanted to ensure that victims were treated like victims, given the care and help they needed to overcome the evil inflicted upon them.

We also wanted to make sure that the traffickers and the buyers were both brought to justice.

HOUSTON SUPER BOWL STORY

This past February, my hometown of Houston, Texas, hosted the 51st Super bowl.

For most Americans the Super Bowl is a fun filled day spent with friends and family cheering on a favorite team.

But for trafficking slaves and potential trafficking slaves, it can be a very dangerous time.

Studies show that big events like Super Bowls create large upticks in the trafficking and purchasing of sex trafficking victims.

In order to counteract this, The Department of Homeland Security, as part of its Blue Campaign Initiative, began preparing months in advance.

DHS agents came to Washington, DC and briefed me and other members of the Texas Delegation on their anti-trafficking strategy for super bowl weekend.

Through the Blue Campaign, DHS raises public awareness, forges anti-trafficking partnerships and brings suspected human traffickers to justice.

I commend the Blue Campaign for collaborating with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in preparation for the Super Bowl.

As a direct result of this large multi-agency operation, over 750 people were arrested across 15 different states.

At least 86 victims were rescued, and many more were likely spared being forced into the trafficking industry.

Having personally worked closely with the Blue Campaign on this, and many other operations, I see firsthand the important role DHS has in fighting the scourge of human trafficking.

This DHS Blue Campaign Authorization Act will ensure that this critically important program continues to provide safety to victims and justice to their traffickers.

SUCCESS OF JVTA AT 2 YEAR MARK

Over the last two years, more than 65 defendants have been charged with federal human trafficking violations.

Of those, 10 were buyers.

Without demand, there would be no market.

JVTA gives law enforcement the critical tools it needs to capture and prosecute criminals who purchase sex from minors or trafficking victims.

Long gone are the days where buyers could anonymously purchase sex from trafficking victims and simply return to their normal lives.

JVT also allows a federal judge to impose an additional assessment of up to \$5,000.

This money then goes into the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund.

This fund provides victims with increased access to services and resources.

It forces the criminals to pay the rent on the courthouse, forces both the buyer and the trafficker to pay for the system they created.

They inflicted pain and suffering on innocent people, they should be the ones to pay.

JVTA also clarified that the U.S. Marshals Service can assist local, state and federal law enforcement in the search and rescue of missing children.

Since the implementation of JVTA, U.S. Marshals have helped rescue 102 children.

As JVTA continues to be implemented, and prosecutors and judges are trained on the new tools it offers them, we will continue to see more and more traffickers and buyers held accountable for their crimes.

We will also see a system that treats victims like victims, providing them with the care and support they need to become survivors.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. POE of Texas. Tonight we have this Special Order, and we have several Members who are going to speak on this. The first Member who will speak is Representative WAGNER. She has served in the House since 2013, and she has, herself, worked extensively on human trafficking issues. She is a cosponsor of the Shame Act that I have sponsored, and we have worked together. I am honored to introduce her as our first speaker on this very important issue of the human trafficking after 2 years of the legislation being signed. I yield to the gentlewoman.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for the opportunity to co-lead this Special Order with my dear colleague, Congressman TED POE, for Human Trafficking Awareness Week.

I was thrilled, Mr. Speaker, that yesterday the House passed my legislation, the Put Trafficking Victims First Act. Together, we can get victims of trafficking out of dangerous and abusive situations and create better, more accessible trauma-informed services. Victims don't just need to be rescued. They need opportunities to rebuild and sort through trauma and to live well.

My bill advances a survivor-centered approach to addressing human trafficking that ensures the safety, confidentiality, and the well-being of victims. It encourages stakeholders to recognize symptoms of trauma and coping mechanisms that may impact victims' interactions with law enforcement, the justice system, and service providers.

One of the key ways we can address the upsetting realities of human trafficking in the U.S. justice system is by giving victims a pathway to vacate and expunge their criminal records for offenses that they were forced to commit. I have met with many survivors in my home State of Missouri and across our great country who struggle to rebuild their lives because they are trailed by criminal records. Traffickers and pimps intentionally push victims to commit crimes as a means of control.

My heart breaks for these women who have suffered horrendous abuse and bear the mark of a record on top of it. Criminal records make it difficult for survivors to get jobs, medical care, education, and even housing assistance. These records haunt survivors and can even lead to revictimization.

Mr. Speaker, if we are serious about giving survivors of trafficking a second chance, we must enact serious, fool-proof vacatur laws that erase the collateral consequences of treating trafficking victims like criminals. This is why I introduced, along with the support of many of my colleagues, the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act. This bill would give victims of trafficking relief from Federal or D.C. criminal convictions or arrests.

We know well that Federal courts are not—and I underscore “not”—infallible, and that many victims are trafficked within the District. These women don't deserve criminal records. They deserve restitution, civil damages, and the empowerment to walk with their heads held high.

I am adamant that these women get a second chance at life, that they find housing, therapy, jobs, new friends, and new chances. I am adamant that the United States of America will no longer punish people for trauma that most of us cannot even imagine. I am adamant that the United States Congress will have the moral aptitude to enact the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act. I am adamant that not one more victim of trafficking will be mistreated in our criminal justice system. Mr. Speaker, I am adamant that we pass this bill into law.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman. I would like to ask a couple of questions if she doesn't mind. I know she has other appointments, but I wanted to ask her a couple questions. I would like to know how has the trafficking situation in her home State of Missouri decreased, or how has this legislation helped?

Mrs. WAGNER. Well, I will tell the gentleman that the legislation that he

and I have worked on for a number of years and that he has spent the better part of a lifetime as a judge and as a legislator on is saving lives; but, sadly, my hometown of St. Louis, Missouri, would be ranked in the top 20 counties or cities in the Nation for human trafficking. So the problem is prevalent. It exists still.

What breaks my heart most of all are those children who have been victimized, whether it is by online predators or other means, those who are the most vulnerable in our society. We have been able to work with many of the safe houses, with our prosecutors, with our law enforcement, with our advocacy groups.

As Congressman POE and I both know, we can't always legislate all the ills of society away. What I appreciate about the work that we do is not only passing laws and legislation to help those victims, but also the education and awareness that is so very important. So anything that we can do to lift those advocates up, to bring a spotlight to this modern-day slavery is so very important.

I commend the gentleman from Texas for his work and for the Special Order here tonight. I look forward to a day when this heinous crime, this modern-day slavery no longer exists in the United States of America.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentlewoman for her comments. I also wanted to compliment her on her tenacious work of going after backpage.com and making that resource unavailable for those traffickers and those buyers. I want to commend her for that.

Mrs. WAGNER. I thank the gentleman. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that these online predators are the bane of our existence. It is a dark underbelly of the human trafficking and sex slavery trade that is out there, and it is absolutely unconscionable that crimes can be committed online that would not be allowed to be committed offline. We are going to go to the heart of the Communications Decency Act with my next piece of legislation that so many attorneys general and States and prosecutors and law enforcement and advocacy groups are begging for Congress to act to make sure that there is clarity so that States and the Federal Government can prosecute, and to make sure that we make the changes that are necessary in a very specific and narrow way to make sure that those online predators are not victimizing the children, women, and young boys of our land.

I look forward to working with the gentleman and my colleagues on much more work in this arena.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman being here and making such powerful comments.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. GABBARD). She is an Iraqi war veteran and a former member of the Hawaii House of Representatives. She is working specifically, among other things, in the area of the juvenile justice system, trying to reform that.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague for his leadership on this and many other issues, really taking up this cause and being a champion for the voiceless.

Last month I was in my district in Hawaii, and we traveled all across the State, on every island, holding town-hall meetings on a variety of issues, but one of the meetings and forums that I participated in was at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, and it was specifically around this issue of human trafficking, of sex trafficking.

In this small community in Hawaii, many people had gathered—it was a full room—trying to increase their own awareness and share more information about the prevalence of this issue, not just in places in other parts of the world, but in our communities right here at home. I think that is something that surprises a lot of folks that I talk to, is you can read about these human trafficking problems in cities in Asia or other parts of the world, but very rarely do people think that it is happening in their own backyard, in their own hometown, when the reality is that this is a very real issue that exists in far too many of our hometowns and our communities all across the country.

In my own home State of Hawaii, girls as young as 11 years old have been recruited from schools, from beaches, from malls through an intricate network of sex traffickers. In 2016, last year, 30 cases of human trafficking were reported to the human trafficking hotline in Hawaii. Almost all of them had to do with the exploitation of women for sex and labor, and in 10 of these cases the individuals targeted were minors.

Now, what we know and what is terribly disturbing is how underreported this actually is, that these numbers are not at all representative of the reality that exists in our community because trafficking is more common than the number of cases reported.

Now, too often those who are victims of and those who are forced into trafficking are charged as criminals and are forced to live with this criminal record for the rest of their lives, never being able to escape the shackles of nonviolent crimes committed in the course of their being victims of human trafficking. This often inhibits them from getting the care and assistance that they really need, to be free, to be able to move on with their lives.

Our current criminal justice system is broken in so many ways, and in so many ways perpetuates a cycle of crime, exploitation, and poverty, stripping the most exploited and vulnerable individuals in our society of a fair chance for a new life and healing from unimaginable abuses perpetuated by truly evil criminals.

Now, at the local level in States like Hawaii, we have passed legislation that bans sex trafficking and classifies it as a class A felony, but that is not enough. That is why I am so proud to

be a cosponsor of the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act, because it creates this promise of freedom for those survivors from the shackles of their past. It establishes a process to vacate convictions and expunge arrests for those charged with criminal offenses related to human trafficking, finally putting survivors on a path to rehabilitation and healing rather than a life of continued exploitation and abuse.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to get this legislation passed and actually enact this change so it helps those in our communities who need it the most.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Hawaii for her work on this. As you can tell, this is a bipartisan effort. When we took this legislation 2 years ago and brought it to the House, there were 11 bills that came to the House of Representatives, and they almost all passed unanimously. Then they were sent to the Senate, and the Senate combined them into two bills. The same over there, almost unanimous; and then back over to the House, and the final passage was almost unanimous once again. It is a bipartisan effort, and I thank the gentlewoman from Hawaii for her work on this and her service to our country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER). He is one of our newest, if not the newest, Members of Congress. He served in the Pennsylvania State Senate for a good number of years.

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Judge POE for the work that he is doing this evening to bring attention to a critical problem that desperately needs our attention and needs our solutions, that of human trafficking.

The three largest international crime industries are drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and human trafficking. It is uncomfortable to talk about, but we can't shy away from talking about the fact that in the world today, young boys and girls are being sold across the globe for an average price of \$90. It is not just in remote parts of the globe. More than 14,000 people are trafficked into the United States each year. It is happening all across America, and in Lancaster, Berks, and Chester Counties, the district that I represent in Pennsylvania.

□ 1900

Four out of five people trafficked in the world today are trafficked for sexual exploitation. Eighty percent are female and half are children.

Antitrafficking groups gather in our churches, restaurants, and schools all across Pennsylvania and across the country. Those individuals, and the victims of trafficking, should know that they have allies in Congress.

My office has been in contact with organizations in my district like Safe Berks, the Chester County Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition, and law enforcement officials to discuss ways that we can work together to help victims.

I am also very pleased to cosponsor the bipartisan Trafficking Survivors Relief Act, introduced by my colleague ANN WAGNER, who was here with us this evening, from Missouri, a leader on this issue.

Victims of trafficking are forced to commit crimes like prostitution, drug dealing, and money laundering. We cannot punish these victims for crimes committed because of coercion and under the threat of violence or death.

We must ensure that we are doing all we can to help victims recover from these unthinkable experiences. This legislation will help to do that by providing more judicial discretion for victims to clear their names of any wrongdoing.

I am proud to stand with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this legislation that helps end this barbaric practice.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his comments, and now for his work on this issue of trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO), another Ted here in Congress. TED YOHO is serving Florida's Congressional District 3. He is vice chairman of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, and the chairman of U.S. House Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee. He has supported many bills on this issue of trafficking and has worked very hard in his home State of Florida to bring awareness to this.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I thank Judge POE for his tireless work on this issue. And I appreciate the leadership, and LLOYD SMUCKER. And as he has talked about, this is a bipartisan issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to modern-day slavery, because that is what this is, in the form of human trafficking.

Most people believe human trafficking only occurs at home. It is a foreign crime that would never happen in our community, let alone their own backyard. To that I say: Let me tell you about human trafficking in rural America.

I come from a district that is very rural. We had several summits on this issue. We talked to the local sheriffs and to the local police departments, and they said: Do you know what, we don't have that problem here. We are okay.

We invoked the help of the Department of Homeland Security, and they have got a great campaign called the Blue Campaign. We encouraged these officers to show up. And I am happy to say that most of the people that we talked to—the counties and the sheriffs—showed up.

And it wasn't more than about 2 weeks that I started getting calls from the sheriffs. And they said: Do you know what, that is happening right here.

It is an awareness campaign. And Ms. GABBARD from Hawaii mentioned how underreported it is. Of course, it is, if

people aren't aware of it. But when you bring awareness through campaigns like the Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign, people wake up to this issue. And I love their motto: If you see something, say something. Let people know this is going on.

So let me tell you about our home community. In March of this year, a special needs student in Jacksonville, Florida, was kidnapped. Her captors placed her under house arrest, basically. They incarcerated her for human trafficking. They placed an advertisement online offering her sexual services, which is quite possibly the only reason the police were able to find her. These people were advertising on the internet.

Also, in March of this year, 15 men were arrested in my hometown of Gainesville, Florida, on child solicitation charges. These men were discovered as part of an undercover operation that led them to believe they were communicating with young girls. The men believed the girls' guardians were allowing them to commit sexual acts with underage girls.

Only 2 months prior to this arrest, a Gainesville man was sentenced to 25 years in prison for sex trafficking an adult.

A month prior to that, Polk County—another rural county—detectives arrested 114 suspects in a human trafficking and prostitution ring. At least four of them were immediately identified as human trafficking victims. And merely 3 months later, an additional 104 were picked up in a second sting for human trafficking, including those soliciting sex from minors.

These are but a few examples of human trafficking-related crimes that have occurred in my community in the last 6 months. Florida is estimated to have the third highest rate of human trafficking in the country, following only behind California and New York—third in the Nation. That is not something any State wants a designation for. All three of these States are ideal because of their access to ports and interstate highways, allowing victims to be transported across State lines easily.

And it is estimated today—and I, again, sit on the Foreign Affairs Committee with Judge POE, and we have seen these numbers too often. It is estimated that 21 million people are trafficked around the world, resulting in an estimated \$150 billion in profits—profits from the sale of a human individual that goes to the traffickers who are often drug smugglers or terrorist organizations.

The 13th Amendment to our Constitution abolished slavery in this country. However, it still exists, and it is right in our own backyard. Because of this, we need to do all that we can to eradicate this.

The runaway child is picked up within 48 hours and forced within the sex trade. This is something that, if you

believe in the 13th Amendment, we all need to stand up, take an active role in this, and we do this by the legislation that is up.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Judge for being a strong advocate and always being there for this.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, how many minutes do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE). She, like the women in Congress, who I have given a lot of credit for all of this trafficking legislation, is very concerned about victims of family and domestic violence.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise as an original cosponsor of the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act of 2017, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this truly bipartisan piece of legislation.

We have come a long way in this country in recognizing and acknowledging the problems of sex trafficking; and not just laying the blame at the seat of a so-called prostitute but understanding that this is a crime where the persons being trafficked, as you have heard my colleagues say, are imprisoned in sex trafficking. And why is it?

You heard them talk about the \$150 billion impact that this has. There is a huge incentive to sell these women over and over and over and over again. Because unlike drugs, you can resell these products of these victims again.

Survivors of sex trafficking can't just walk away. They are in prison. They endure violent beatings, brainwashing, sexual assault, psychological control, and control of their purses and their identification. But then they find themselves arrested and convicted for prostitution, labeled as sex offenders, and then just revictimized by a system that doesn't understand that they were prisoners of this lucrative operation.

These survivors face long-term negative consequences. They are denied access to employment, housing resources, and student financial aid that is needed to develop a sustainable safe and stable life. The Trafficking Survivors Relief Act offers survivors postconviction relief from criminal charges stemming from nonviolent offenses committed as a direct result of being a victim of human trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, an estimated 300,000 children become victims of sex trafficking every year through fraud, force, and coercion. Many of them think, You know, I am going to be taken out to dinner by someone who loves me, and find themselves imprisoned at that very moment. Many of them are then arrested for these crimes that they are forced to commit.

In my State of Wisconsin, 79 percent of human trafficking cases reported in Wisconsin occur in my district, I am ashamed to say.

In the city of Milwaukee, last year, as an example, Mr. Speaker, two sisters, ages 16 and 17, were rescued during the FBI's Operation Cross Country. They told an undercover Federal agent that their mother had forced them into prostitution. Had they been arrested, instead of recovered from their mother, who imprisoned them, would they have deserved to be branded for life with a criminal record?

Imagine every time that they applied for housing or for financial aid or for a job, that they would be denied on the basis of their criminal record; and they were coerced into this act as minors by their own mother. Imagine the re-traumatization and further devastation that repeated denial would have caused them.

It just makes these people so vulnerable, and it deserves a legislative solution that we are proposing here today.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her strong comments. I know where she stands on the issue of victims of violence.

Mr. Speaker, the 2-year anniversary of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act will be Monday. As a former judge and co-chairman of the Victims' Rights Caucus, with JIM COSTA from California, this is an important issue. I bet most Americans have never heard of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act because it was passed with bipartisan support, overwhelming support. Things like this don't make the news because we are not fussing and feuding between the two sides.

But it is a very important piece of legislation for our country. It goes after the trafficker. It makes sure they get arrested, and they go to prison where they belong. It also goes after the buyer, the person who hides and tries to buy young children on the marketplace of sex slavery. But it rescues victims and turns them into survivors. That is why this legislation is important.

The average age of a trafficking victim in the United States is 13. That means some are younger than 13. And it is a menace and a scourge that we, in the House of Representatives, along with our friends in the Senate, are going to make sure that the legislation is appropriate to solve this epidemic. That is why we are reminding individuals that we have this piece of legislation that is passed, and other pieces of legislation as well.

The last thing I wanted to mention is part of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act allows Federal judges to impose a fee on the trafficker or the buyer, and that money goes into a fund that helps victims of trafficking. That is a great idea. Make the criminals pay the rent on the courthouse by this type of restitution program.

I want to thank all of the people who helped out tonight. There is a lot more to be said about the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. We are going to continue to bring awareness of it to the American public.

I can tell you one thing, though, traffickers and buyers know about this legislation. With the help of local and State and Federal law enforcement, we are going to stop this sale of our children and adult women here in the United States for money.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, this week, as the House of Representatives considers human trafficking legislation, I am proud to continue working with colleagues from both sides of the aisle to raise awareness on the heinous practice of human trafficking and to work together to eradicate it from our communities.

I thank my friend and classmate, Congresswoman ANN WAGNER of Missouri (MO-02) for organizing tonight's Special Order Hour.

Human trafficking—where people profit from the control and exploitation of others—occurs both here at home and abroad on a daily basis.

In fact, the International Labour Organization estimates that there are 20.9 million victims of human trafficking globally—68% of them are trapped in forced labor, 26% of them are children, and 55% are women and girls.

And in my home state of Ohio, human trafficking for sex and labor is on the rise.

According to recent reports from the Polaris Project, a nonprofit that tracks trafficking in the U.S. and abroad, 375 Ohio trafficking cases were reported from 1,352 calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2016. In 2015, there were 289 cases based on 1,070 calls. The 2016 numbers reflect a nearly four-fold increase over the Ohio figures from 2013.

While the overall increase in reporting can be partly attributed to greater awareness of the national hotline, we know, and officials confirm, that trafficking is, unfortunately, chronically under-reported.

We must do more to help trafficking victims and to encourage people when they see something that looks like an individual is being trafficked, that they say something.

Victims of human trafficking often live in the shadows of our society, so it is up to all of us to help identify and rescue victims of trafficking.

While human trafficking spans all demographics, there are some circumstances or vulnerabilities that lead to a higher susceptibility to victimization.

Runaway and homeless youth, as well as victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, are frequently targeted by traffickers.

Men and women, boys and girls, who are all alone, abused, and often believe they have nowhere to go.

Well, we can help. We must do more to assist victims of trafficking and provide them with the services and treatment necessary to regain control of their lives.

We must also ensure the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking crimes is focused on the traffickers, the people assisting the traffickers, and the purchasers—the individuals who are the real criminals in the enterprise.

Almost two years ago, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act—or the JVTA—was signed into law. The JVTA is helping to update efforts to combat the scourge of human trafficking and provided essential resources to survivors and law enforcement officials.

I am proud to have had a provision included in this comprehensive legislation and to have taken part in its drafting, passage, and enactment.

Mr. Speaker, since the JVTA's enactment, we have witnessed important achievements, but we cannot stop here.

We must continue to work together to eradicate human trafficking and support the victims. Tonight, I pledge to continue to working with my colleagues to raise awareness and fight back against human trafficking, because as we all know, one victim of human trafficking is one too many.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of traveling with the Vice President to Louisiana for official business.

Ms. MCSALLY (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for after 12 p.m. today and for the balance of the week on account of personal reasons.

Mr. KIHUEN (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 4 p.m. and tomorrow.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 366. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's vehicle fleet, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, May 25, 2017, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1420. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of General Daniel B. Allyn, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of general on the retired list, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1370(c)(1); Public Law 96-513, Sec. 112 (as amended by Public Law 104-106, Sec. 502(b)); (110 Stat. 293); to the Committee on Armed Services.

1421. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries [Docket Nos.: 120328229-4949-02 and 150121066-5717-02] (RIN: 0648-XF210) received

May 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1422. A letter from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final specifications — Pacific Island Fisheries; 2016 Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures [Docket No.: 160422356-7283-02] (RIN: 0648-XE587) received May 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1423. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries [Docket No.: 150121066-5717-02] (RIN: 0648-XF259) received May 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1424. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Office of Strategic Operations and Regulatory Affairs, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Medicare Program; Advancing Care Coordination Through Episode Payment Models (EPMs); Cardiac Rehabilitation Incentive Payment Model; and Changes to the Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement Model (CJR) [CMS-5519-F] (RIN: 0938-AS90) received May 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. JEFFRIES (for himself, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DONOVAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. CURBELO of Florida):

H.R. 2617. A bill to provide first-time, low-level, nonviolent simple possession offenders under age 25 an opportunity to expunge that conviction after successful completion of court-imposed probation; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania (for himself and Ms. SÁNCHEZ):

H.R. 2618. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide further tax incentives for dependent care assistance; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 2619. A bill to prohibit the Coast Guard from establishing any new anchorage grounds in the Hudson River, New York, until it reports to the Congress on the potential impact of such anchorage grounds to sites listed on the National Priorities List and to critical habitat; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. BISHOP of Utah (for himself, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. PEARCE,